

Q168\_2\_TEXT

Thinking of your experience over the past 2 calendar years (2019-2020), were you satisfied with the scientific professional development opportunities available to you at EPA? - No (please provide comments and/or detail your reasons) - Text

1 I was not offered any scientific professional development opportunities. The past year may have been a result of the pandemic.

2 POLITICS AND PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF EPA MANAGERS.

3 n/a

4

Over the past two years, I would say that EPA has gone out of its way to NOT provide scientific professional development training and opportunities. I'm hopeful that that will change.

5 There were no opportunities available to me.

6 EPA only cares about furthering the careers of staff who agree with their left-leaning political agenda. We tend to promote people into senior positions who will go along with the accepted narrative and not rock the boat. All this talk about following the science is just that...talk.

7

There is a lack of any information that is provided Region wide to the staff on any opportunities for scientific professional development. There is a lack of funding, or so we have been told. Furthermore there is no outreach to staff in the Region regarding what kind of avenues there are for scientific professional development, this is especially important information to provide for new staff.

8 N/A

9 Trying to get new research projects off the ground felt like too much work to get approval. Didn't foster a culture of of research.

10 There were no training opportunities.

11 The opportunities were limited and those that were available were difficult to obtain.

12 N/A

13 Opportunities to professional development are only provided to a few chosen employees (based on gender, color, even religion basis) within (b) (6).

14 Trump Senior political appointees were anti-science, so what scientific professional opportunities were there?

15 n/a

16 There are not enough resources to ensure that scientific professional developmental opportunities are available for those that want it. There are too many trade offs just to ensure that there are resources to do the minimal core work.

17 Seems the same people get the so-called opportunities

18 The reluctance to provide promotional opportunities to scientific/engineering/technical staff to the GS-14 level (as technical experts as opposed to management) is eroding institutional knowledge as those who demonstrate a high level of expertise in these areas depart for better opportunities. This has been an issue for over 30 years in (b) (6). It seriously damages morale. EPA management does not take this issue seriously.

19 Development opportunities were not promoted

20

(b) (5) I submitted an abstract for a conference but it was never reviewed because (b) (6) management was too busy finalizing the first 10. I am being asked to "mentor" all the new hires when this really means managing their work because managers are too busy. I sent a note to (b) (6) senior leaders asking them to reconsider my assignment to ECRAD in the reorganization and was told to apply for my old job in (b) (6) if an opening occurred.

21 Politics hindered all decisions. Continuous swinging during different administrations made EPA less credible.

22 COVID

23 Not just science, but there has been NO professional development opportunities available to me because I have been blacklisted by EPA management.

24 i am at my max GSA level of 12 for my position. there is no room for improvement in that way

25

We are so overloaded with the micromanaged minutiae of day-to-day just getting the work done, there is no time for, or encouragement of, professional development.

26 Not Applicable

27 I haven't heard of any scientific professional development opportunities made available to me at EPA.

28 You were not allowed to expand your interest and study or learn new things. You had to strictly attend to your supervisor-assigned duties.

29

Unlikely that publications would progress from Agency efforts, other avenues for information release, while productive, were not geared towards professional development

30 Was not able to attend conferences, no support to attend conferences. Extremely disappointed.

31 Scientists are not politically savvy so they are usually not a "chosen one". This means they are not promoted and worse, totally un-qualified "managers" are promoted. For instance, if a set of managers (b) (6), how do they still have a job? Does not set a good example of what to do to build a culture of integrity when not doing so gets you promoted.

32 Professional development depends on funding and available time. Both are in need of major improvement at EPA. Funds are short and most offices are understaffed, so too much work to do and no time for professional development.

33 Scientific professiona development was an apportunity for my position.

34 There have been no resources for professional development such as travel and conference fees.

35 Decisions were made without scientific basis. During many briefings to politicals it was clear they had spoken to the regulated community on several topics prior to staff scientists and disregarded our input. (b) (5).

36 Too many hurdles to active collaboration with folks outside the agency (i.e., academia) and sometimes even within the agency due to siloing

37 I used what they gave me.

38 scientific professional development opportunities are not central to my primary role, and the pandemic pretty much eliminated most opportunities in 2020 for conferences I was planning on attending anyway.

39 It was through personal initiative from outside sources. No structured development provided by Agency

40 We're too busy individually to support extensive scientific development.

41 See previous comments.

42 There were none. No conferences or trainings, even virtual ones were often nil. There is a scant budget for travel and training which was not used even during the pandemic when rates were cheap and nobody wanted to travel. Scientists need to see other scientists in order to learn, that is how it works, that is how it has always worked. It is one reason we fall behind scientifically, because we are unable to receive the training we so desperately require. Meanwhile, the money is unevenly distributed, with some parts of the Agency flush with travel money. I can go on at length on this topic. It is ultimately unfair, unsatisfactory, and asking for trouble.

43 I am a (b) (6) (b) (6), (b) (5)

44 Not applicable to my position

45 Due to the pandemic, restrictions in travel and lack of funds, opportunities were limited to nonexistence.

46 Was not given good opportunities to present, or discuss, with other colleagues scientific findings. (b) (5)

47 The previous administration did not support scientific integrity or development of the sciences. Our region did their best to protect scientific integrity and its employees within the constraints the administration pushed upon us.

48 Although the scientific integrity policy says that the agency supports professional certifications and involvement in professional organizations, staff must participate and obtain their credentials outside of official work time and at their own expense. It is also difficult to obtain permission to engage in outside activities involving speaking and presenting at professional conference. EPA also needs to officially recognize long standing environmental certifications and incorporate them as a standard of professional care into regulations and guidance, similar to the way OSHA recognizes the CSP and CIH credentials.

49 Didn't hear about any

50 Virtually no money available for travel, training, conferences, or meeting attendance.

51

I am looking for opportunities to use my (b) (6) I have not seen many of these types of opportunities available.

52 Instead of choosing a program specific training class from a very short list of options, I would like to have the option of reading a textbook that is very close to my work specialties. (b) (6) I would like that scientific professional development opportunity. In the meantime, I take one of the classes, rarely learn anything useful, and check the Training box.

53 The Region seems to value programmatic excellence over scientific excellence.

54

Under the last administration that ended in the election of 2020 I personally felt afraid to ask for support on scientific activities and very much believed I should minimize my visibility and activity, especially in my areas of scientific and technical expertise as recognized internationally as I am typically sought out for my subject matter expertise.

55

The pandemic has reduced the availability of development opportunities. The agency has done a good job of pivoting to online-based trainings, but they can't replicate the developed courses previously available. After we return to a more normal world, I expect this issue to resolve itself as I was satisfied with opportunities before the pandemic.

56 Not many scientific professional development opportunities available.

57 Scientists from marginalized groups (i.e., LGBTQ+, physically disabled) rarely get or are asked to be part of these opportunities to advance at EPA.

58

There is too much focus on certain buzz words and less on the work that matters. The work should matter no matter would is in charged but politics plays a huge factor.

59 As an (b) (6), I've often wished for more "environmental science 101" type trainings or self-guided learning opportunities. I think I would be better at, e.g., (b) (6) if I had more knowledge of and confidence navigating the relevant scientific concepts.

60 The scientific professional development opportunities were lacking outside of standard CLU-IN training webinars. Unique opportunities were largely unavailable. Focus on outdated ELMS process to "improve efficiency" took away focus from any meaningful opportunities.

61 We may in incredibly difficult to work on high profile topics. The senior leaders do not trust staff and require too many levels of approval. We miss out on a lot of opportunities due to the numerous hoops we have to jump through.

62 Need more training

63 Science has been the enemy at EPA for the past 4 years. Management as a whole has systematically worked to advance the political leadership's agenda and do so without transparency or feedback from the staff. The air at EPA is stifled and although current political leadership supports honesty, integrity, and transparency, they have done nothing so far to promote accountability among the career management team for aiding and abetting the political leadership for these past 4 years. That said, NO there has been no meaningful opportunity for scientific professional development; the goal has been to stifle advancement and development of science.

64 I felt that opportunities were limited and restricted to engage with others outside the EPA.

65 I applied to, and was accepted by, the (b) (6) online. Though this training will directly support my ability to perform my work, my management has: (b) (5)

Taken together, this experience has been the most demoralizing of my 17-year career.

66 Scientific development over the past two years..? Apologies here, but I cannot actively recall one single national scientific training in anything. There were some options from (b) (6) but those were offered as optional at best and often required having a knowledge of the program or staff beforehand.

67 not a lot of office-wide training opportunities, particularly on emerging wastes (PFAS) and way too much on economics

68 I felt that there was too much direct oversight and permission required to engage in professional development. Professionals should be trusted to pick appropriate development opportunities without needing a permission slip.

69 None provided. All professional development opportunities are fluffy (ie. "work life balance" or "how to conduct a meeting", etc).

70 It is hard to find time to do this with the workload

71 There were no such opportunities available. (b) (6) doesn't tend to offer professional development opportunities, scientific or otherwise.

72 Professional training has been lacking.

73 (b) (6) and was not selected.

74 Not many scientific professional development offered

75 the previous administration, who was in charge for most of this time period was terrible with this issue. They had an agenda and wanted to see it pushed forward regardless of staff input based in science or law. I also saw a lot of senior career managers either run interference for the political appointees or completely adopt their way of thinking. This survey is also difficult to answer because I had 4 different first line supervisors during that time period, maybe 3 different branch chiefs and Acting Division Directors.

76 Doesn't apply to my position.

77 n/a other then seeing the news that budgets and policies are influencing how research is conducted.

78 Could be better

79 (b) (5). (b) (5).

80 Limited travel and training opportunities.

81 Opportunities were not really discussed or encouraged. There were definite favorites among the staff, especially those who toed the line, kept their mouths shut and followed orders. Not a lot of dissent was welcomed, encouraged or even permitted.

82 While numerous hours were devoted to training on how to interact with QA administrative systems (b) (6) in particular), no time was devoted in a similar manner (e.g., formal, management encouraged) to training the scientific staff on topics like version control, new programming languages, or other scientific skills. Staff often feel like these tasks have to be done on their own time or without management knowing because they may be accused of not focusing on the current project. (b) (6) often employs techniques without follow-through eroding staff confidence in (b) (6) ability to improve processes. For example, my unit was trained in ELMS techniques in a full-day in-person retreat. We continued ELMS by making proxy cards to track projects. We never used any of the ELMS techniques to identify issue and improve processes. We never received any feedback to improve our workflows. The flow of information was one way from the staff to the proxy cards.

83 I was hired in CY 2021

84 It was biased towards the goals of the political appointees and the presidential administration at that time.

85 There is little opportunity for scientific development within EPA or (b) (6) Budgets don't seem to allow for it or managers choose their pets to get much needed training and development opportunities.

86 COVID limited conferences where I am able to interact with the top practioners in my areas of practice.

87 I did not find many options offered by EPA for training regarding computer programs widely used in the industry, engineering related trainings, or statistical software.

88 There were not many opportunities for scientific professional development, granted that most of 2020 required work away from the office due to COVID.

89 Oppourtunies were extremely limited, but this was largely a function of the pandemic. As the pandemic eases, the Agency needs to reinvigorate professional development oppourtunies, particularly for younger staff.

90 Could have been more trainings available and opportunities for advancement

91 None were made available to me

92 I am not a scientist and there is no N/A option.

93 None available

94 I have not had opportunities offered to me that match my scientific professional development needs, as I am not a scientist, engineer, or technician.

95 New employee

96 no training or seminars

97 Attending of scientific webinars and conferences are usually the first things to go in the travel budget. Trainings for scientific topics are no advertised or appear to be available. I am often told there is too much work to be done to allow me to participate in professional development activities.

98 n/a

99 There is no plan in place to develop talent. It's always on the job training which is insufficient due to often poor group dynamics.

100 N/A

101 Upward mobility is an issue in my location and in my position.

102 We have been given lots of opportunity to do training via online sources but the main thing that has been difficult to obtain is specialized training on technical topics that require hands on learning. COVID-19 has a lot to do with that. I trust that things will improve as the pandemic gets under control.

103 I'm not aware of any scientific professional development opportunities that were available to me during 2019-2020.

104 What are these "scientific professional development opportunities" of which you speak??? Just Shut Up and get the work out.

105 Not aware of scientific professional development for EPA (b) (6) staff.

106 I havent been an employee at EPA for that long.

107 lack of support for conferences--quotas for numbers of people who could attend

108 Why bother pursuing scientific professional development when it is neither valued nor trusted?

109 Certain topics were forbidden from discussion, (b) (5) This has changed in the new administration.

110 I don't think this has anything to do with the last two years but with my organization; when I moved into it, I realized it just didn't have a culture of staff participating in scientific professional development as other organizations I had previously been in.

111 As stated previously, training and travel funds were pretty much non-existent. There was little to no opportunity to develop others or to develop my own skill sets with agency support. It was up to me.

112 Limited staffing and budget did not allow for extended immersion by scientists to write and or travel to conferences to present.

113 In my current position, I do not have the option of ever being promoted. I will have to either move to another center or to another division AND into a different job role.

114 We hire impressive scientists, but then expect them to be bureaucrats. Allowing most scientists to attend a scientific meeting every 5-10 years will not result in a scientist with an impressive publication record in their area of expertise.

115 If you serve in once capacity for long, others think that's all you know how to do. When given the opportunity, colleagues have proven successfully that professional development in other areas should be considered more often than in the past and currently. Also the playing field is not level. Some are expended opportunity after opportunity when others are still striving to receive their first opportunity.

116 There were few trainings for staff on recent or cutting edge science over the last 2 years. It is shameful we are so behind on climate change and the most important science on what faces the world was not acknowledged the last 2 years.

117 Realistic perspective is lacking in HQ. There is a severe disconnect between theoretic scientific findings, how applicable they are in the real world, and the wide-ranging consequences of such. There should be more field-focused training and much more deliberate interaction between EPA staff and the people/industries being regulated, as well as on the applicability of science-based policy.

118 I was not given an opportunity to go on detail or participate in an agency wide committee.

119 They were rather limited.

120 No, top-down approach with a focus on performance boards and cooperative federalism (term not used correctly).

121 See previous answer. (b) (6) have no promotion potential and are not considered professional staff, rather we are administrative staff

122 Lack of training opportunities

123 First line and Second line supervisors were and are still not supportive of developmental opportunities. They want to do their own thing and make their own decisions.

124 We need more money budgeted to support scientific professional development and travel. This year we were told we only had \$250/person for PD and zero for travel. We also need greater support for duty hours to participate in PD activities. There was a conference where several of us registered to attend but we all struggled to actually watch the scientific program because we were in constant work meetings. This isn't a good use of government funds, it's not a good use of staff time, and it doesn't create an environment where staff feel supported.

125 As a (b) (6) nobody offered me training on scientific integrity even though I was heavily working on issues that relied on scientific products. Had I known about the Scientific Integrity Policy then what I do now, I would have reported a lot of things, because the science coming out of (b) (6) wasn't worth the paper it was written on, largely due to political interference and policy decisions that ignored basic science.

126 Environmental Protection Specialist positions are limited to GS-14. Since job classifications do not match up with positions, two staff doing the same or similar jobs will have different promotion ceilings irrespective of how well they are doing their job.

127 I don't approve of the culture that you have to be both obedient and loyal in order to get a promotion. People are afraid to talk because they think it will be used against them. Most bosses stay really quiet, and are afraid to answer a question with a long explanation. Seems wrong to me that EPA should be so politically driven. Shouldn't somebody's understanding of science come in to play in deciding a promotion?

128 As a (b) (6), there are very little opportunities to keep up with the science outside the Agency. Training outside the Agency is not encouraged, as the workload is so large it does not allow time. Only a few high-level scientists go outside the Agency for educational opportunities, and they may share or not. Often is confusing when they refer to the latest scientific concepts in meetings but we do not know what they are talking about. We must depend on these higher level scientists as experts, make appointments to discuss issues with them. That hinders our work, if we had the knowledge ourselves there would be no need to bring scientific questions to senior scientist, only the policy questions which they are better suited to answer. This is also bad for morale, since scientists require continuous education, but here that is not allowed, so we become obsolete.

129 I don't have a basis to answer this question.

130 Resources available for professional development were limited and were sometimes allocated to people who were less likely to benefit from them than other individuals in EPA who were less "politically connected."

131 Over the past 2 years my work unit has had fluctuating staffing levels. We went from having too few people for the section's work load, so there was no time for development. Now we've hired a bunch of new employees, and the new employees are the ones who really need training. Our branch chief limits attendance to trainings/conferences to 2 people, regardless of how broadly the event would benefit many of us.

132 Unable to find a position in (b) (6) that aligns with my scientific interests and expertise.

133 Their was none

134 I am not aware of any, other than the mandatory training. My supervisor does not have a scientific background and does not understand the standards for scientific rigor; training for him (non-technical supervisors) would be helpful to scientific and technical staff.

135 Lack of opportunity.



136

There could be more opportunity for scientist to expand their experience. Scientists are used for their knowledge for as many years as the scientist allows. The concentration at (b) (6) during the last 2 years has been that management has given management the opportunities to expand their experience while keeping the scientist in the same areas.

137 I want more opportunities to learn about science and technology that is relevant to our work.

138 I do not have any involvement on the scientific professional development.

139 Funds were not available for technical or scientific training needed to stay current and improve or expand skillsets and knowledge

140 Would like to be able to attend scientific conferences that may not directly relate to my work, but would provide well roundedness to my career. Also, make sure there is funding for travel to those conferences.

141

While there have been a lot of online trainings requirements, most of them were canned training, no idea exchange opportunities. Networking, while connected via electronic communications, is really not that much existing any more. While management encourages training participation, there is not much training feedback for growing opportunities. Cross training between organizations is hardly non existing, unless you are lucky enough to be picked for a detail / rotational assignment. Organization has grown in silos, creating an environment where information is not shared or only shared within organization, not been able to see the agency whole picture / needs / interactions.

142 Scientific professional development did not appear to be part of the Agency's workforce development agenda during 2019-2020.

143 Never considered for leadership positions despite EPA and prior background and applying for multiple positions. Cliques in (b) (6) management and if you are not 'in the club', forget it. Monochrome (b) (6) leadership team.

144 some positions in EPA are not available to some scientists that do the work. Some are very concerned that scientific compromises were made during the previous administration. It appears the scientific integrity at the agency will be restored. I hope so.

145 There were the typical/standard professional development opportunities, but I don't recollect any related to science

146 Travel and scientific development is limited to on average once per year, and staff must provide substantial justification to merit it. International travel is virtually nonexistent, even when international conferences and professional opportunities are offered.

147 Scientific professional development is not pushed or stressed enough for scientists working in policy positions.

148 Development opportunities were almost none existent prior to COVID and disappeared after COVID

149 I'm not really aware of any opportunities that were available to me. What would be the options?

150

The agency is way to inflexible, is becoming more like the caste system in India, where people in lower caste levels have no chance to progress, unless people higher up give their "blessing". The the race card is always present. Just look at the rigid and uncomfortable way of assigning office space by grade. One strong reason for me not wanting to go back to the office after pandemic rules are eased. Good luck with an extremely politized agency full of racism in a society guided by "constructed facts"

151 not really applicable to me -- I'm not a scientist -- however, it did not seem like we were being offered the scientific integrity briefings that I thought we used to get every year (I don't really remember, though)

152 Some development opportunities did not occur.

153 Not an incredible amount of opportunities available during this particular time

154 not applicable

155 I don't work in the scientific community. (b) (6)

156 Training budgets are limited and support for professional development are limited. Attendance to major, national scientific meeting is limited to generally 1 person per region unless the meeting is held locally.

157

My supervisor and second line manager are supportive of my professional development. (b) (6) does not foster a culture of inclusion and tolerates bullying behaviors. Staff time is wasted to appease political appointees such as the requirement that all staff participate in ELMS huddles. We have limited time. Spending time on political pet projects takes time away from scientific research. (b) (6) attitude of "no surprises" produces a culture of extreme tracking that also detracts from time spent on science.

158 employee input and engagement is non-existent. All decisions and information is kept solely with managers.

159 No opportunity for advancement.

160 I don't get to attend scientific meetings. However, did get to do more of that during covid while virtual and cheap.

161 Opportunities were cut back

162 Far too busy with assignment do engage in personal development. Far more opportunities to help others develop.

163

COVID has turned everything topsey-turvey so this isn't really a fair question as much scientific professional development involves scientific conferences and or related travel and not course attendance.

164 Little other than statistics available.

165 NO! We were all shut down. It was a terrible culture stagnation, dissent and a lack of a positive culture and advancement for most EPA employees. The political appointees and their staff hires saw progress for themselves.

166 There was no support for science during the Trump years

167 No opportunities available.

168 The training opportunities actually have appeared to increase to at least 2 fold if not greater since the COVID-19. They are also virtual allowing more opportunity to participate. But my workload has more than doubled and I often am too busy to participate in most of the trainings offered.

169 Few opportunities made available to staff.

170 NA

171

Except for (b) (6) I am unaware of other scientific professional development opportunities offered through EPA.

172 EPA does not offer (perhaps through (b) (6) experts) training in any toxicology that would be extremely useful for generalist staff. It would allow us to all be on the same page from an EPA guidance perspective and would minimize disagreements with (b) (6) staff during intraagency review of assessments. External trainings/conferences are available, but they are more generic and not applicable to risk assessment, especially EPA-specific policies.

173

This relates mainly to opportunities for professional development through details or temporary assignments to other EPA offices or regions. Said opportunities are far and apart to come by. And many opportunities come with a seemingly already person in mind by the interviewers and hiring managers. It is not at all very transparent or at least leaves a lot to be desired of the whole experience. I have become stuck in my present office with limited opportunities to further develop my professional skills as a scientist.

174 DOESNOT APPLY TOMY SUPPORT OF SCIENTIST

175 Training was curtailed, we were told the budget was trimmed due to COVID. No alternatives were offered. (b) (6) has been cancelled and our (b) (6), (b) (5) are in dire need to receive this training. One of our states developed their own training for their new LCOs.

176 I think more science based learning opportunities could have been available.

177 Less said about the last few years, the better.

178 Not me personally, but proud of our scientists at the agency.

179 I would like some more classes with basic scientific literacy for EPA staffers not doing scientific work. Introductory classes like statistics, ecology, chemistry, etc. I believe that we are a stronger agency when ALL staffers understand our work.

180 EPA has extensive training on IT, ethics, tribal, contracts, records management, FOIA and other administrative functions. However, scientific and technical training is very limited to non-existent outside of the (b) (6) program. This has been the case for the last 10 years.

181 Limited training funds and besides the EPA webinars, not much training in this area.

182 Unsure: I've only been at EPA a few months, so I don't know that I can fairly judge, but I would like to be more clearly made aware of scientific professional development opportunities that EPA has available to me.

183 I did not necessarily look for any of these opportunities, but I also didn't hear of any opportunities or wasn't encouraged for any of these either.

184 There were very few, if any, scientific professional development opportunities available to me.

185 I felt like there were limited resources available for me to utilize

186 We were not supported to discuss, communicate, participate in scientific meetings. We have been refused travel to professional meetings.

187

Science and scientists, except for those labeled scientists who were politically appointed, were a discriminated group. This may have been more pronounced for scientists in the program offices (who have greater proximity to political/political demands) versus those in the (b) (6). Interestingly, it seems there are more and more scientists hired in EPA program offices (good and necessary for program implementation and for science to inform policy) yet at the same time when EPA itself talks about EPA scientists, they seem to only be referring to those at EPA (who do good science, but often have a negligible/minor role in implementing that science, communicating that science, or assuring that science is considered at the policy-making interface). At the same time, scientific integrity at EPA is at the greatest risk in the program offices---where it actually informs a wide range of agencies decisions.

188 There was no safe space for scientific professional development in 2019 and extremely limited in 2020 (mainly due to the pandemic, plus the elections, etc.).

189 My professional development opportunities have been limited by the need to get the work done. During this time, we were short staffed and couldn't hire. Generally speaking, my management has only supported development opportunities that are temporary promotions. I have interviewed for such positions on numerous occasions but have not been selected; the individuals selected usually had less knowledge and experience than I.

190 I dropped all mention of scientific professional development out of my PARS due to no opportunity. My first line supervisor just shrugged her shoulders not caring at all. I actually had the courage to tell her that I don't feel supported and she doubled down on her lack of support.

191 I didn't have the equitable opportunities to develop scientific professional development until now. I was declined to participate any scientific projects development but assigned to cover the regular work loading.

192

I was free to take the courses and attend meetings/webinars I was interested in, but I was kept in the dark on decisions made on my behalf. I was asked (and wanted) to take on the research area after the PI retired, but was not allowed to mentor or even co-mentor an ORISE student. I am the only person doing my type of research and there are no plans to hire even a post-doc to work with me. The research area is important and currently has a (b) (6) Where is the support for my professional development?

193 I was not aware of these opportunities. I am not a scientist.

194 I am interested in submitting work for internal review for publication but have not been offered any guidance or direction on how to accomplish this task

195 Due to the shrinking staff and no ability to backfill, I was not approved for a (b) (6) I had originally been approved but the new office director did not want to let staff go when short-staffed. The overall environment was one of hunkering down during a storm.

196 There is never enough time for staff to do rigorous professional development because of the pressures of the day to day work.

197

The availability of funds to participate in scientific peer-to-peer activities like conferences, professional meetings, and panels was greatly diminished. At the heart of the (b) (6) mission is staying current with the best available scientific information and one of the best ways is to attend scientific gatherings where the latest research can be shared.

198 I have no response for this question.

199 There is a lack of opportunities and adequate trainings for scientific professional development

200 This question is irrelevant to me because I don't require scientific professional development opportunities, thought (b) (5)

201 We had these?

202 There is limited scientific development opportunity. It is difficult for staff to attend professional meeting. Management attendance or participation is not supported. Requests to go to technical meetings is usually denied so people stop asking. There is no advancement track for non-managers. Advancement to high grades required giving up science. This provides a clear message that science is not very important.

203 I have no scientific work in my position at EPA.

204 Although some opportunities are provided through (b) (6) for scientific professional development, the workload within the Agency makes it difficult to take the time to prepare the required proposals (which are very time consuming) or to take the time away from your primary job to participate in scientific study

205 Favoritism runs rampant. Career opportunities exist elsewhere!

206 (b) (6)

207 Poor/Not enough mentorship; brain drain due to mass staff resignation/poor retention

208 We continue to be denied access to conferences and meetings, despite virtual options and substantially reduced costs. (b) (5) The same few scientists are tagged to attend conferences each year, often presenting others' work who are not allowed to attend. This not only hinders each scientists' professional development and promotion potential, but prevents us from networking and engaging in meaningful discussions with other experts which would further the science and enhance our products. We continue to be restricted in what we are allowed to present and how many presentations the divisions are allowed to make at a given conference.

209 There are training opportunities but often there are not scientific training opportunities available. Funding greatly limits the ability to attend scientific events.

210 There are staff in regions and at HQ that base policy decisions not on science, but solely on the interests of industry and suppress those that share scientific findings that might challenge current policy.

211 Training requested as part of development were usually not approved.

212 No, there are not enough developmental opportunities and resources to train staff.

213 No fault of the Agency. Many opportunities were canceled or delayed until further notice due to the pandemic.

214 Professional development has been accomplished independent of (b) (6) mostly thru arrangements directly with (b) (6) and outside research and engineering groups on my own time. Internal training and education efforts have been a mixed bag with approvals being closely correlated to whether of not a manager had to put some effort in.

215 not sure what is meant by this.

216 There was no funding available to pursue scientific professional development opportunities.

217 I'm not aware of any professional scientific integrity trainings offered by EPA.

218 No training money really available, and the same people keep taking all the training money that is available. No efforts by management to provide needed professional level training.

219 I wasn't provided with professional development opportunities outside one very inexpensive online meeting.

220 Our (b) (6) program has not offered training of any sort that will make for better decisions. The last time I had such a training was in our old building, so prior to 2007. I've had lots of training on how important it is that I respond to data calls, and make sure the cross walk form is filled out - (b) (5)

221 There were no opportunities for scientific professional development. The workload that we carried due to politically-imposed timelines for rulemakings made it impossible to do anything but rulemakings. The timelines were impossible, science was ignored, and it created an environment where we were barely surviving to get things done to support the political agenda.

222 Discussion and debate of fact was unwelcomed.

223 Needs to be supported by supervisors and management. Also, needs a commitment with oversight.

224 No comment

225 team leaders catered to what their supervisor want not really what the science is indicated. The numbers will be altered and assumptions will be changed in order to get to a number that they believe the political appointees will accept. The managers and supervisors already know what political appointees want and make sure the options reflect that. As employees we are trying to get to the magic number that the supervisor/director want to get to get the rule/regulation will pass.

226 Does not largely relate to my direct duties.

227 Neither agree nor disagree

228 Cancellation/delay of the (b) (6) created a large void in opportunities to network with professionals across the country. this was one of the main opportunities to learn from and collaborate with other scientists and (b) (6) around the country.

229 Pandemic has led to limited travel so technical training (such as instrument specific training) has not been as available as in the past.

230 Budget uncertainty has reduced the scientific professional development opportunities across EPA. Several excellent training/development programs were eliminated or not held due to budget as well as pandemic-induced uncertainties.

231 Limited training, limited capacity for experience to be used as mentors or even promoted as useful to incoming colleagues

232 EPA does not use science consistently to make decisions. In some programs, the science is strong and is used to make decisions, but not all programs.

233 Training dollars seem to be very limited which therefore limits professional development. EPA should also make it easier to attend internationally recognized conferences.

234 There is pretty much zero training opportunities offered. Staff are left with not tools or written guidance to do their jobs. Often I am asked by management "how do you feel about this project" rather than any quantitative evaluation of the project. I chose to pursue a developmental detail despite my supervisors objections, and I find the new job much more rigorous and ethical.

235 I was given no time to pursue scientific professional development as a result of absurd deadlines by the Administrator. Conferences were not attended and manuscripts were not pursued. Further, the approval process for manuscripts, starting with an abstract having to be submitted prior to any writing, inhibits scientific integrity at the agency. The approval process, under the guise of lean, is a slap in the face to science. Abstracts should not have to be submitted prior to research/writing.

236 The funding for individual classes and other opportunities provided were skewed to a few favorite people over and over; technical classes offered by the agency, especially (b) (6) are offered so rarely, for no actual reason, that they were impossible to grab a spot in- by the time they are announced to all - they are already full - management knows it and just go on pretending to honestly offering opportunities to everyone group classes offered to all are necessarily very large and very general

237 The Agency does a poor job in general of promoting scientific professional development among regional scientists.

238 Much of this was due to limitations from the pandemic.

239 N/A

240 Fear and trepidation put everyone in a position of measured steps and befuddled thinking on where the politics were to ensure safety of job and position.

241 (b) (5)

242 The nature of my work in the past two years was such that there wasn't a lot of opportunity to advance my scientific professional development.

243 I was not aware of any scientific profession development opportunities available.

244 In recent years the opportunities for professional development were seemingly more limited and less a focus of the agency.

245 No, but I think this is separate from the Agency's scientific integrity. I have found the majority of EPA-sponsored training opportunities to be unhelpful generally.

246 no training opportunities, no funding for important research, no opportunity for technical staff advancement

247 We were not only NOT encouraged to explore professional development opportunities, we were actively prohibited and discouraged from exploring professional development opportunities. (b) (5) The administration had already cancelled our daily news feeds and made it harder for us to access scientific information. One (b) (6) division director told us he wasn't going to give us updates on what was going on in our own agency- that we "should all just read the news". Even our social events, which allowed different branches to mingle and catch up and potentially come up with new ideas, were cancelled. Managers did not allow employees to explore online training or external development opportunities (and never shared information on how to request funding for training). (b) (5) Managers also kept employees out of manager meetings and did not allow presentations at all-hands. At the awards ceremony at the end of the year, it was also made clear that (b) (6) managers did not nominate or support nominations for awards for their employees, so as not to draw more attention from the political appointees to the scientific work we do. The idea of being promoted was laughable- (b) (5) There were no opportunities to develop a career plan with my supervisor. When I left my position in (b) (6) to take another opportunity, I cited the lack of professional development as a major reason for leaving. (b) (5) As if I should know my place. (b) (5)

248 Difficult to get access to, limited budgets, management is not overly concerned with professional development. Too many hoops to jump through.

249 Attendance at large annual professional meetings is arbitrarily capped without a good rationale.

250 there was a marked difference in availability of scientific professional development at EPA. Now COVID-19 didn't help in general, and I think these opportunities tend to be supervisor based.

251 Workshops/presentations have been useful, but they are usually targeted to "new/younger people" that often already come to EPA with scientific research and writing abilities from their M.S. or PhD degrees. If you want agency-wide scientific professional development, you need to work on having the longer-term/older people feel comfortable with the skills and technology that science professionals are bringing to the table to move the agency forward.

252 The pandemic greatly impacted people's ability to train.

253 There were very few opportunities for scientific professional development.

254 I joined the EPA less than a year ago.



255 I cannot comment as I recently returned to the agency. I was not here for most of the time period that is in the scope of the survey.

256 not applicable to me

257 There weren't many opportunities for me to develop professionally because my workload was too hard to manage.

258 It has not developed much, but I really don't care anymore

259 Lack of sufficient funds to be able to attend training and/or maintain professional organization membership.

260 The agency, driven by political, economic and antiquated principles, shunned science entirely and created a hostile work environment for those individuals attempting to uphold the EPA's scientific integrity and continue its mission of protection human health and the environment.

261 Not applicable.

262 I did not seek out scientific professional development opportunities given that they would have been denied as not relating to my job.

263 The pandemic got in the way of professional development, but has improved greatly in 2021

264

Writing articles is not encouraged, no training on scientific professional development. I would personally like a training like that. Training in general are not encouraged by supervisor

265 Limited advancement opportunities to go from GS-13 to GS-14 as a scientist. Even with a doctorate.

266 Science was subject to attack from political leaders and that had a trickle down effect

267 There seemed to be limited opportunities offered.

268 Not very familiar with the topic.

269 Secrecy prevented us from sharing information at scientific professional development events.

270 I do not work in the scientific field at EPA.

271 Not enough information shared to staff

272 what development opportunities?

273 We are behind the times for almost everything technical when compared to other industries. Technical training is rare (I only remember a single technical training event in 10 years). Ethics training is yearly, other training which is not technical in nature is plentiful but almost useless for those (b) (6)

274 I did not have such opportunities

275 not applicable because I didn't take advantage of any scientific professional opportunities that I'm aware of.

276 There was not a lot of scientific professional development opportunities offered at EPA. Had to seek outside options like at conferences or workshops.

277 Not much was really available on scientific professional development.

278 I don't recall any opportunities. But I am not a scientist so wouldn't expect any.

279 There could be training courses on various topics for nonscientists.

280

Travel to scientific conferences, (b) (5) was completely cut off. The pandemic (whose severity I blame largely on the administration), also force me to cancel a lot of travel that would have been very beneficial as both professional development opportunities and for my contributions to the Agency's mission.

281

Due to keeping our heads down (laying low) from the political appointees in the last administration so that we aren't on the chopping block, I felt discouraged from publication and joining panels and doing anything that would put our program in the limelight. Yet even after all that, the politicals still dramatically cut the (b) (6) program. During the reorg when the program was decimated and when multiple people were forcefully reassigned without any say and wanted to leave, any career movements were blocked by IO.

282 I was working in a program outside my academic expertise during the majority of this period and therefore feel it isn't fair to comment on this.

283 Haven't seen to may opportunities advertised

284 Training was all virtual and would prefer some in person training.

285 N/A

286 I would like to see more opportunities for scientists outside of (b) (6)

287

2019-2020 was the years of staying alive and duck and cover. I have never been so discontented with my work or the EPA. I have worked under many administration in my career, but this experience with the last administration has felt heart breaking and insane. The disfunction in EPA has been so shocking and the dismantling from within has been devastating.

288 not enough training or travel dollars

289 Would like more training opportunities, including training non-scientists about various scientific fields.

290 Because I feel bullied and ignore at my position.

291 We seem stalled during the Trump administration out fear of retaliation.

292 There was little to no opportunities available for scientific professional development. We (b) (6) were told to develop & increase our customer service to industries and polluters. Inspectors (b) (6)

293 The Agency needs to create less restrictive IT rules for (b) (6). Our Agency assumes all staff simply use Microsoft Products. The need for (b) (5) (b) (6), often multiple versions of these softwares in order to be able to review projects done several years ago, seems to be impossible for USEPA IT to comprehend and support.

294 EPA needs to support (with travel funds), the capability of its scientists to attend scientific conferences and meetings that are not necessarily sponsored by EPA.

295

As a whole, EPA as an Agency did NOT seem to be making decisions that impact the United States citizens from a scientific findings/evidence. Nor was the Agency recruiting new African-American scientists. The new hires were NOT given new opportunities, in terms of training, to help advance or assess other opportunities that were available to them in other parts of the Agency.

296 Some opportunities were not available due to lack of availability to travel (this is related to the pandemic.)

297 well, covid.

298 Not provided with training on advanced data analytics yet was working with large datasets

299 N/A

300 No professional development that has worth.

301 A research project that was selected for a (b) (6) project was then stalled when it went to the RA's office.

302 Due to being under-staffed and increasing work-load, there is very little or no time for scientific professional development opportunities.

303

(b) (6). When a person is over-whelmed with administrative duties with the threat of deadlines/punishments, it is impossible to thing creatively or constructively of science. I was being left out of science altogether. I complained to my supervisor, but he seemed to feel that it was out of his control.

304 Attending scientific conferences were very limited

305 Despite many new hires, our training budget had been completely cut. So not a single dollar was spent on training, just employee time was used.

306 Training and travel budgets have been slashed making attending professional development opportunities almost non-existent. Granted covid made travel largely a non-starter anyways, but even registrations for virtual events were difficult or garnered little support above first-line supervisors.

307 No professional development training

308 I am not a scientist and did not seek scientific professional development.

309 There wasn't much engagement

310 Valuable training from outside vendors were missed due to the COVID-19 issues. Travel to other regions to assist in their projects was cancelled due to those same issues. This is a BS question when considering there is/was a pandemic for over one of these calendar years.

311 As a person who is eligible to retire I perceive resources are expended on those with a longer time horizon.

312 I have not had many opportunities due to covid.

313 Other than agency-wide mass-mailers, scientific integrity / scientific professional development isn't something routinely, if ever, discussed in our program.

314 Serious problems related to the very existence of our planet were not addressed.

315 I'm not aware of such opportunities or if they would be relevant for my role in (b) (6)

316 Scientists in my unit have not been prioritized for EPA-sponsored professional development opportunities.

317 I don't think many were made available during this time period.

318

I've only been here a few months and don't feel qualified to really answer this question. But generally, I haven't see any scientific professional development opportunities.

319

Excessive QA procedures and internal peer review requirements are not evidence of strong commitment to scientific integrity. They are the opposite. They have the effect, and perhaps even the intention, of suppressing productivity. They delay the timely production and submission of manuscripts to peer-reviewed journals, which impede the progress of (b) (6) scientists' careers.

320 there were none

321

I think the ability of scientific staff to participate in professional meetings has been declining for many years. Nothing was done in the past two years to reverse that trend.

322 I have limited scientific professional development opportunities in my role and scope of work.

323

Few to no opportunities for scientific professional development for staff at (b) (6). Culture is such that (b) (6) take priority above all else with essentially no room for scientific professional development. Staff have been told by managers that their requested development, "does not align with the missions and goals of (b) (6)." Or told that there is not sufficient funding to support participation in opportunities like the Department of State's Embassy Science Fellowship. Management and leadership at (b) (6) has little to zero understanding of cross pollination of ideas, skills, and knowledge in the scientific disciplines and the possible value of staff participating in development that doesn't necessarily align with "(b) (6) mission and goals." More often development opportunities are doled out on a take it or leave it basis.

324 In my experiences, my line management gives lip service to professional development. They say it is possible to do and that they'll support it, but then they make it almost next to impossible to actually do.

325 You have to be part of the (b) (5) at epa or you are not welcome. Many people at epa do not support business and therefore support policy that is based on political agenda and not science!

326 I was unable to attend scientific professional development opportunities and conferences because of paperwork stalls, even when there was no cost to attend.

327 I believe the staff has an extensive knowledge on Scientific Professionalism, where I do not see the same level of commitment/support from the political resulting on a very difficult position to the HQ career SESs.

328 In the last 4 years, the have minimum opportunities for scientific development. Rather, it was discouraged.

329 The word development means that we develop of policy and decisions off science base information. This has not been the case in the previous administration. decisions were mainly based off pleasing certain economic entities.

330 Professional development was just put on hold to "outlast" the incompetent administration.

331 not applicable

332 Scientific professionals were extremely limited in participating in conferences. It's ridiculous that one person has to attend and represent multiple disciplines. It's impossible for EPA staff to keep their academic credibility or increase their credibility if they are not able to participate in the academic community, and that reduces public trust in the Agency as a whole. Cloistering scientists makes the public think we have something to hide. Scientists in EPA need to have more public roles to share the science with other experts in their fields, and also adapt science from other academics and professionals for the benefit of the Agency.

333 EPA has very little funding for professional development and training for scientists and engineers. What little money is available is tightly guarded and only available for small portions of the year. Sadly, based on the ham-fisted system, whether a scientist or engineer is afforded training depends on them asking at the right time.

334 I am not aware of any scientific professional development.

335 We need more

336 Not many choices of training I could take and training fund is not transparent.

337

It is hard to work under an administration that does not believe in climate change, embrace coal and fossil fuels, and then call the corona virus a hoax that killed almost 600,000 Americans. Personally, I was absolutely horrified by the galactic ignorance of the previous administration and I am so grateful that we are back on track for a better tomorrow.

338 There was no understanding of the work we do with our co-regulators, or the acknowledgement that those of us who work with our co-regulators pay a price when the Agency does not make a good decision, or makes a decision based on politics instead of science.

339 i work in (b) (6)

340

No, overall training limited, budget cuts, and often difficult to do the job. We are all over worked, people leave, retire due to low morale and not replaced. Science advisors are not being hired, senior advisors, and the culture really needs help from the last administration. It caused huge issues and was the lowest of times, surrounded by idiots that knew nothing and only had ideology and agenda.

341

Covid has severely limited training and development. Management has severely limited training and remote learning because of budget concerns and workload concerns.

342 Don't feel strongly about it, but beyond limited FedTalent trainings I can't think of any such opportunities.

343

As an (b) (6) the opportunities for our scientific professional development is limited to none. I have the scientific knowledge and 10-20 years of experience in the environmental program I work and unable to progress/explore other job opportunities that seek individuals that are Life Scientist, Environmental Engineer, Biologist within the organization. It would be fair that the Agency just grandfathered in the EPS to the Life Scientist Series especially for those that have acquired the scientific experience for over 10+ years. The Agency should review the individual's work experience and reclassify their professional series.

344 The focus has always been to get product out the door. No encouragement for development.

345 (b) (5) and a focus on alleged "back to basics" significantly reduced scientific professional development opportunities for myself. Such a mindset took the Agency back several steps, particularly during a time when we were fully entrenched in a pandemic and needed to have an Agency that was evolved, flexible, forward-thinking, and most protective of public health and the environment.

346 very political. Science was surpassed by Cooperative Federalism

347 It hasn't been clear which opportunities EPA would financially support. It also seems like funds are pretty limited and often get spent on more interpersonal development type trainings. While those are valuable too, I do feel like some of my hard skills are beginning to fall behind.

348

While the program in which I have been employed puts a strong emphasis on training, including science-based training, and the role that scientific evidence should play in our decision-making, the reality is that decisions are sometimes made based upon non-scientific considerations. In my experience, political appointees and/or senior career management have allowed consequential decisions -- (b) (6) -- to go unmade because of political pressures. This dichotomy is jarring and suggests a gap in the theory of the program and the way that it is actually administered. I have been frustrated by what I have observed and am pursuing alternative career paths as a result.

349 Career growth for scientists is minimal compared to administrators, who grow without any hard work or scientific excellence.

350 budget continuously cut, there is very little opportunities for scientific conferences, discussions, training

351

Senior Manager denied travel to a national workshop to present research/technical work already accepted into the program with no reason given, specific program funds were available, first line manager supported travel, withdrawing from the workshop was an embarrassment to EPA, one of the executive sponsors of the event. Limited opportunities and funding for technical development and training. (b) (6) hinders collaborative opportunities and fails to foster research and innovation. Recent hires often do not have strong academic credentials and in some cases lack a scientific course of study, focus appears to be a body count (increasing numbers) instead of a careful selection process for the right person/right job.

352 Trainings non-existent or funding cut.

353 Not enough opportunities

354 Primary reason for selectin this answer is due to the COVID-19 pandemic which severely reduced opportunities.

355 The are no opportunities at EPA for scientists who have demonstrated skill beyond the GS15 level, unless they want to be a manager. That is a flaw at a fundamental level for scientific integrity and scientific professional development.

356 No comments.

357 In addition unscientific premises, crushing workloads precluded time for training opportunities.

358 I did some short trainings, but in general I did not and do not have the extra time to go on details. It is a resource issue that might ultimately impact scientific integrity - we are one deep on most of our projects, and taking a four-month detail to gain experience is a luxury.

359 There are way too many development and maintenance requirements and opportunities, so unless you're not very busy (i.e. people in lower demand, more junior) none of them are given the appropriate time and energy. EPA needs to prioritize these things rather than just adding more and more straw to the hay pile.

360

i haven't had any technical or scientific professional development opportunities because there is too much work to be done, and the Office doesn't adequately resource our program with enough FTEs.

361 I will not comment for fear of reprisal.

362 Did not come in contact with scientific professional development, I am a (b) (6)

363 The way in which the selections occur are very ambiguous and unfortunately people get left behind, and OPM training is 'selected' for 'select' people that I can't tell you how many have now left the agency. It's frustrating, and I have put off training I was offered to take care of family and to do work as a priority.

364 Available funding to support training is always in short supply.

365 High quality cutting edge professional discipline training is not valued or supported here at EPA.

366

Supervisors have all the power to block staff from participating in these types of activities. Supervisor's approval should not be required for staff to participate in scientific professional development. It took me 4 months of discussion with my supervisor and one written letter in order to participate in one. There should also be more opportunities for scientific professional development.

367 no details for scientist in other areas. very limited developmental options

368 N/A

369 Didn't hear of any opportunities!

370 Frequently, there was either no funding available for my scientific and technical training, or in cases where there was funding available, we were not able to use it for training needs before the funds expired.

371 Too occupied with projects and didn't even have time to seek any development opportunities.

372 (b) (5)

373 While supportive to keep me on committees, none of my work is being funded and was cut over the last 2 years. There has been little scientific development in my shop, however, other Centers in my Division are doing good science.

374 There were no mandatory or annual SI trainings.

375 Many Senior Level EPA Managers, especially the Political Appointees appear to NOT provide professional development opportunities; except for those that they personally favor based Identity Politics, etc.

376 due to the administration's political decisions, several programs and actions along with the associated potential development opportunities were de-emphasized or stopped without clear scientific basis provided

377 Severely limited during the Co-Vid isolation. The fees at the professional meetings are expensive and many times I have paid on my own just to present. Too difficult to get \$ approved in advance while working at home while doing other work.

378 Not much offered.

379

I asked for training to support learning goals - due to other competing workload pressures and inadequate funding I was unable to fulfill any scientific professional development at that time.

380

I don't feel there is much opportunity to pursue scientific work at my level except as it pertains to policy. We have one person in our division that I would say focuses on science.

381 EPA specifically (b) (6) is hemorrhaging resources. We have too much work to do and not enough people to do it. Only the important news-worthy cases are given time to develop. Other cases management prefers to get them done as quick as possible. Currently I am working on cases from 2 years ago 2018 and 2019. I feel like I under the current circumstances I won't be able to professionally develop my science career at this agency.

382 The previous administration did not prioritize this issue for themselves, let alone staff.

383 Added transparency is needed regarding explanations when scientists are told they are not approved to submit research for conferences or papers. At times this has seemed subjective. It would be helpful if there was a formal process, clear values, and an appeals process.

384 These questions aren't really centered around staff who aren't scientists (ie support staff).

385 Only recently was a level of training and personal improvement attended to in the region.

386

Staffing has gotten thin enough that there isn't much time for career development as we are all pitching in on "other duties as assigned" to keep the day to day moving

387

Scientists and Engineers have been maligned and silenced by both political appointees AND career EPA employees who were eager to please the political appointees. HR policies (discussed previously) in (b) (6) have nonscientific/unqualified 1st line supervisors overseeing scientific work; have reclassified scientists and engineers as EPS nontechnical employees; and have forced the hiring of nontechnical EPS (no degree required!). When there is no respect for scientific work or hiring scientific employees, then how do you expect there to be scientific professional development?

388 I do not recall seeing any scientific professional development opportunities over the past two years.

389 There haven't been a lot of professional opportunities at all lately, due to hiring freezes and lack of promotions/opportunities to change roles once hired.

390 Not enough encouragement or promotion within the agency to know what these opportunities.

391 N/A; This does not appear to be directly applicable to my work duties (however, there is concern about data not being applied properly in risk assessments that affect stakeholders and the public in general)

392 This was not shared with me, I was not aware of any scientific professional development opportunities.

393 Travel issues due to COVID-19 and the general preference for Principal Investigators and managers to attend training or go to conferences

394

Professional development is not given enough focus due to micro management of scientific staff and overloading scientists with administrative duties that prevents any chance of professional development. The management team focuses on project deadlines and work products despite sacrificing quality, scientific integrity (b) (5), and safety. Time is not allowed for professional development when scientists are consumed by administrative duties outside of normal scientist functions.

395 If there were opportunities available to me at the EPA, I did not know about them. There was no mention of any scientific professional development opportunities available to me. I had scientific work that had to be done and that is what I did everyday.

396 Not much training available the last few years in areas of scientific endeavors that I worked on.



397 We usually don't have enough \$ for the training opportunities we would like to offer our staff, and of course the pandemic eliminated the few opportunities we did have. I would like to see more staff having the opportunity to attend professional conferences and continuing education classes, but we just don't have the \$ for that. I think it hurts us in terms of recruitment as well, since people expect they will have these types of opportunities and are surprised to find we don't have the \$ for that.

398 There is no scientist career development track beyond the normal staff GS levels. To get beyond a GS13, a scientist must go into management. EPA employees generally have access to science based training generally when there is no cost agreements in place. Training budget has been severely limited and there are typically only a few slots available for paid training conference.

399 I didn't have these opportunities. But I'm not a bench scientist, so that may be OK.

400 we have lost so many resources over the years, we really have minimal development opportunities. This has been independent of political leadership. Resources have decreased for more than a dozen years.

401 Resources for scientific inquiry and opportunities for professional development were directed to political priorities of the administration. Career management encouraged continued research, but available resources were not sufficient to produce scientific products or to continue scientific professional development.

402 I'm not aware of any past development opportunities.

403 Our vast workload does not seem to allow for certain professional development activities. It appears you have to do it on your own time.

404 I don't feel many opportunities were provided to me as a career scientist.

405 The last administration, in power during the two reference years, discouraged science at the agency, and discouraged hiring at the agency, recommending instead a large cut of personnel at the agency.

406 I think more programming should be offered for an organization like EPA which employs a large number of scientific professionals. These could include trainings on emerging scientific techniques and analysis, or inviting cutting edge scientists from other realms (industry and academia)

407 Certain areas have limited opportunities for professional development. Cross training should be made available and encouraged, which is not done.

408 I think this whole survey is missing the point. Certain areas of the agency's work as it tied to its mission have become politized. I personally did not experience a lot of interference or pressure to conduct rushed or poor science. I did not feel pressure to change the outcomes of scientific results. These statements pertain to work areas/program areas we were told/authorized to work on. However there were large areas of work that we could not work on. So there was not interference/pressure in those work areas because there was not active work. The work was just shut down and there was no need for any level of management or staff to feel pressure. I think you should have included questions about whether you had work/program areas that were active and then shut down and work stopped or funding was eliminated. In other words, I am not sure there was a ton of bad science within the agency. I think there was just zero science being done in certain areas of work that the Agency historically worked on or perhaps should work on since it fits within the Agency's mission. So for some employees in the agency there was no areas to work on that fit the professional development plans... they might have been hired to work on a certain topic and then told to stop.

409 Most (b) (6) employees are classified as GS-12 or less. Only a few positions are GS-13. The GS-13 level is necessary to advance to supervisory-level positions (GS-14 and above). Because the GS-13 positions are limited, so is one's ability to advance in career (to stay at that level) or as a supervisor, even if all other qualifications are met. I have seen employees strive to advance and be denied many times.

410 Science was suppressed at EPA and when not suppressed it was tailored to appeal to certain interest groups. EPA lacked boldness when it came to science and supporting scientists.

411 Restrictions in travel and training funds did not allow for professional development.

412 I did not see many new positions or promotions for scientific professionals.

413 I was not aware of scientific professional development opportunities.

414 Difficulty receiving training or guidance on learning new scientific analysis techniques, especially being a newer employee.

415 I'm not involved or familiar with scientific professional development. In the (b) (6) we conduct new employee orientations and on-boarding to ensure selectees for these scientific positions were hired and more than capable understanding their role to comply and meet the needs of the agency's mission continuing to protect human health and the environment.

416 There are opportunities to attend some conferences and trainings, largely with COVID negating the need for travel. There are very limited opportunities for EPA staff outside of ORD to engage in research. E.g. usually limited to one selected research proposal per region each year. Research proposals are chosen by the interest/media attention for a topic, e.g., (b) (5)

417 There was lack of support for attendance of scientific development by my second line manager.

418 I am not sure what "scientific professional development" means in this question. Is it about SI in general or about improving analytical skills.

419 It was not encouraged or openly communicated that we could engage in such activities.

420 Trainings seem to have been offered at a less frequent pace. In 2020, much of this was due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

421 lack of genuine support by supervisor

422 I was not aware of any professional development opportunities specifically geared to scientific integrity.

423 Every time i try to do a training it is either full or i am told to wait for a later date

424 Very few direct training opportunities were offered. I have been able to continue gaining knowledge by involvement in national technical workgroups. And I have been able to train and mentor new staff. But outside of that, very few if any opportunities are provided. And when they are, being understaffed for years, the workload has made it almost impossible to pursue any opportunities.

425 na

426 very limited in FY20 due to pandemic and FY19 due to Trump budget

427 Scientific professional development is heavily based on whether your scientific conclusions agree with the politics of the day. Those researchers that work on issues that management likes and produce conclusions that upper management wants to see are the ones whose scientific professional careers develop.

428 In the (b) (6), opportunities for special projects were awarded to staff (b) (5), (b) (7)(A) Staff (b) (5), (b) (7)(A)

429 discussion of technical issues is almost non existent- focus now is 100% on administrative non-technical topics- work status towards quarter and year end commitments/management beans, linear paper reduction, filing/archiving, and electronic media management - technical discussion is dissuaded

430 Not applicable

431 Technical staff were not allowed to do much of anything, including our regular jobs. Based on the culture during these two years, I put projects on hold until the Administration changed. It was too perilous to allow that work to continue for fear of them undermining the work. In addition, it took extraordinary and time-consuming effort to defend programs and not allow 'bad paper to hit the street.'

432 Work is stove-piped by technical expertise; difficult to gain experience or involvement outside of immediate position or area of expertise

433 Do not recall any opportunities

434 I didn't feel like I received the proper training to do my job.

435 Was not able to attend training about renewable energy and climate change

436 COVID certainly impacted professional development opportunities. I have also noticed that training budgets for frontline staff appear to be limited.

437 Needed some hands on/in person scientific professional development but due to the pandemic, it couldn't happen. Not really the EPA's fault.

438 - Scientific clearance took 6-8 weeks even for non-controversial findings. - Scientific clearance often required multiple edit rounds from senior officials (b) (5) - including under the Administration caused major rework) - Workload and shifting priorities had a general chilling effect - Engagement with stakeholders (even internal ones) was discouraged

439 Scientists with the technical acumen and recognized globally in their scientific fields of endeavor are not made use of properly.

440 There needs to be more opportunities for staff to advance their knowledge in specific fields. Most trainings are broad or for awareness purposes. This is where we can improve. We need to be on the cutting edge of science as well so more opportunities to learn about advancements in science and how they can be applied to our work.

441 There needs to be a return to supplying funding for continued training and collaboration for (b) (6) to ensure they can do their jobs to the best of their ability.

442 Unless you fall into the favored group of people that has connections with the director or other minions, you are solely considered as "staff" and have no chance of developing professionally. I work in a culture of fear and retribution here at EPA.

443 EPA was being actively downsized, presumably with the intention to dismantle the agency.

444 There was very little support for development opportunities that required time away from an individuals position. The focus was on meeting deadlines above all else.

445 N/A

446 Not much opportunity was provided.

447 the overwhelming amount of work means that even when scientific professional developmental opportunities are available we may not have the time to take advantage of them.

448 Little opportunities to expand or explore this area in my professional development

449 Did not feel that scientific integrity was being valued.

450 Not entirely clear what these "scientific professional opportunities" are. Some examples could have helped better answer this question. My first impression is that I can't remember there being many such "opportunities". One potential reason being the COVID-19 pandemic during that time period.

451 Travel and training funds are insufficient for most employees in my division to attend professional seminars, training, or other scientific professional development opportunities.

452 I have been offered no development opportunities at all in the last two years.

453 climate and environmental justice were de-prioritized

454 Need more opportunities to learn about social science and how to work well with communities to help them build resilience to climate change and disasters. Need more opportunities to learn how to communicate risk and other scientific topics to communities.

455 I feel I have lost my scientific professional development in lieu of the demands to manage existing systems.

456 a senior level manager in the (b) (6) did not support a professional development. She did not and would not provide the reason in writing and required it to be communicated through lower managers. When asked "why" the training would not be provided, it was communicated through other managers that "she did not have to answer why in person or in writing."

457 Part of professional development is acknowledgment of expertise. The Regions have been told we do not do the level of work Headquarters does, and therefore should not have GS13 positions and few if any GS14 technical positions. (b) (6) does precedent setting Air work with national implications on a regular basis. We have national experts who lead national workgroups and provide expert input on critical policy decisions and in litigation. If we cannot support our staff by recognizing their expertise and value through a GS13 or GS14 position, the quality of work will decline, our ability to hire and retain good staff will decline, and our scientific integrity will decrease due to a lack of expertise. It is insulting to be told the staff in (b) (6) do not deserve GS13 or GS14 status. I cannot imagine that Headquarters wants the Regions to stop doing GS13 and GS14-level work.

458 Since I've already mentioned (b) (5), we were given new regulations based on flow and no training to implement it for either agency. We were told it was coming, but in the meantime we were to do our best with the tools at hand. (b) (5)

459 Opportunities exist, but limited according to employee schedule

460

I think my organization has been perpetually underfunded in this area. I have generally been able to do one professional development opportunity per year and am usually limited to events that are local. As a (b) (6) I don't think that is enough to stay abreast of the science. Especially since I work across disciplines (modeling, toxicology, risk assessment, risk communication, etc). Usually conferences are for one discipline or another and so I have to pick-and-choose which area I want to keep learning about each year. I've observed that more seasoned staff get more opportunities for professional development, which as a junior staffer, is frustrating and disheartening as I want to stay up on science and learn more too.

461

Under the administration at the time, science was not looked upon favorably, and therefore the opportunities around science were not particularly available or good quality.

462 With the ever increasing administrative burdens placed on scientists, there is little time for additional training.

463

Very few low-cost or free training opportunities are approved (even free online ones) because those would take away from our time doing our assigned work. Never mind that it is professional development and will help us do our jobs better. We are only allowed to attend professional conferences if we are presenting, however, we are also strongly discouraged from anything that would result in publications/presentations. We are never allowed to work on any cross-Agency workgroups, no matter how relevant they are to our jobs. Those and attending professional conferences are reserved only for the favored few. We are only allowed to go on a detail if they are promotions (and very reluctantly at that) and the entire time one is on detail, they try to get the person to continue (b) (6) work. (b) (5)

464 I was chastised and blocked from participating in web community of practice/webinars. (b) (6)

465 scientific professional development opportunities were not a priority

466 There was no time for professional development due to workload.

467 Careers are not linear and growth is hard to accomplish with just a bachelor's degree. It would be good to have more mentoring about going back to school or timeline steps for success. I feel as though climbing the ranks is arbitrary and based on letters after your name. It has become disheartening for me because I feel as though despite my good work, I'll never achieve what I want unless I stay 20 years...by that time, I could be doing what I want somewhere else.

468

I am a (b) (6) (b) (5) It is hard to try to get him to completely abide by the policies.

469 Professional development for scientists was/is non-existent, except for those that individuals that were seen as favorites.

470 No travel funding available to attending the scientific training and conference.

471 I do not look for "scientific opportunities at EPA" BECAUSE I AM AN (b) (6) !

472 This category does not apply to me

473 Professional development does not exist for scientists in (b) (6) Advancement opportunities only exist for the regulatory track, environmental protection specialist series. We are forbidden from attending scientific meetings on official time.

474 Budgets were cut and hiring staff in the science fields was severely restricted. Remaining staff were not provided travel budgets or training budgets, and all approvals for travel/training had to be approved by senior management (where previously those decisions were made by 1st and 2nd line supervisors). Training requests were routinely denied for lack of budget, but senior management would not provide budget numbers and it was felt that they wouldn't approve for any staff.

475 please don't send survey i am (b) (6) for our office. thanks!

476 I did not have opportunity to take advantage of scientific professional development during that timeframe.

477 There is not that much real science involved in what I do so, since it is not part of my job functions there is discouragement towards advancing my science knowledge.

478

Extramural funding such as RARE, RESES, R2P2 have typically been the primary avenue for professional development along with attendance at major disciplinary conferences such as SETAC. However, with the upcoming changes to RARE we may have far fewer opportunities to do unique applied work for the region or interact with other professionals in the organization. We are also being squeezed to not attend conferences (often we only attend once every few years) or to only have one staff member attend for a discipline. Annual attendance should be required and we should set the expectation that attending will provide staff the ability to apply the most recent information in their field. We need standard metrics for assessing that. There is little to no opportunity to interact with professionals outside EPA when in the regions.

479 Not applicable to my position

480 I do not recall such emphasis from the agency to seek scientific professional development opportunities

481 Didn't seem to be a great deal of opportunity in this area in my region, possibly due to a great deal of turnover in 2019 and the COVID pandemic in 2020.

482 Many trainings had to be self-initiated. Would appreciate more guidance/ scientific mentorship. Loss of key staff/mentors is challenging

483

I have a science background but work in a non-science job series (b) (6). I do not see opportunities to bulk up on my scientific skills to make me eligible for the science series, even though I know I could perform in those roles with more training. This inhibits professional movement in the Agency, though my policy experience could be valuable if I was able to make the switch to a more technical role.

484 Budget reductions particularly around training and professional development opportunities

485

I spent the last two years in an acting position that was functioning above my paid grade. My immediate supervisor and myself asked the IO I was supporting if I could have a temporary promotion multiple times and we were ignored. Now we have hired a person to take over the acting position and I am hoping to get back to my regular duties but I am expected to train the new person without any input from the IO on what I am supposed to teach them. I am helping because I want my replacement to be successful, but it is frustrating for both of us.

486 My work does not really involve research or publications in journals. However, I do make presentations at conferences, etc. I will say that I felt very cautious about what I would say during those presentations. (b) (5)

487

I was not encouraged to participate in professional societies or to get or maintain professional certifications. I was not encouraged to participate in scientific meetings.

488 There is no professional development at (b) (6). Management makes it sound like there is development in theory but its not supported. I tried bringing in a cognitive bias speaker and it was ignored by (b) (6)

489

EPA does not support participation in professional scientific societies or make scientific professional development a priority. This is especially the case in (b) (6). It is a priority as long as all the other work gets done. And since there is a lot of other work to get done, professional development becomes a stressful thing that eats into personal time or means you have to feel guilty or apologize for anytime a program task didn't get done because you were participating in a previously schedule professional development activity.

490 Professional development of scientist seems to have more support than the professional develop of support positions.

491 Many things were sacrificed (work/life balance, science integrity, transparency, professional development, etc) in the pressure to get BS documents out that we knew wouldn't stand in court. You can see it in the standing comp time approvals.

492 N/A

493 Scientific professional development opportunities are only available to people who zealously promote the sociopolitical agenda of the political appointees and produce "scientific evidence" to "justify" the policies and regulations post hoc. Again, the current administration is orders of magnitude worse than the previous administration. The current administration has made it a top priority to publicly punish sociopolitical apostasy.

494

Not applicable - not everyone is a scientist but we should still be valued for the work we do and our expertise! It seems that there are no longer any higher level non-supervisory promotion opportunities for policy experts with advanced degrees doing high quality work and representing the U.S. government in high profile situations! I definitely feel that scientists are more highly valued in the organization.

495 During the past two years, EPA let relationships dissolve which curtails our ability to learn from partners and get things done.

496 In order to foster new thinking and connections, scientists and managers should be able to attend one scientific meeting per year where they do not have to present a paper. That requirement prevents learning across disciplines.

497

This is a laughable and resounding no. It is important to note that this problem again, started well before 2019 and is attributable to long term lack of noticeable concern of maintaining (b) (6) as a leader in scientific research. Decisions, including the use of the Title 42 hiring process, has put managers in precarious non-stable environments that prevent them from speaking 'too loudly.' The expansion of this program to research scientists is alarming for many reasons first, the lack of protection to speak out for fear of their contract not being renewed is obvious and apparent. But in terms of maintaining a workforce on the crux of future scientific needs, term limited scientists are not incentivized to innovate and push new scientific boundaries if they are needing to renew their contracts on 5 year bases. There is a reason why tenure exists - successful research programs do not exist on 4-5 year windows. Expertise takes a life time to build. Continued reliance on Title 42s and similar term or contract-dependent programs in lieu of standing expertise will be the death of (b) (6). Lastly, it sets up (b) (6) to be drastically shifted during political climates adverse to environmental health and ecological research. There is a drastic need for permanent scientific laboratory staff. The destruction of the research cores during the reorganization only worsened existing problems. Management need to stop talking amongst themselves and start listening to the issues that the staff scientists having screaming out for years. There is significant fear and discussion in the 'hallways' that there will not be a real research program in the next several years. If something does not change soon, it is difficult to see how this will not become the future.

498

I am trained as a scientist with an advanced degree, but my current role is more policy-focused. I have not had access to as many scientific professional development opportunities as I would like. My impression is that management does not consider scientific professional development opportunities a high priority for scientists in policy-focused roles.

499 Speaking engagements, conferences, interactions with peers at other agencies or in the legal community were tightly controlled and, in fact, actively discouraged in order to prevent dissemination of ideas that were not viewed favorably by the prior administration, including at the regional level.

500 Due to workload unable to participate in scientific meetings of most importance to scientific development.

501 I am a new employee. Not enough experience at EPA to comment.

502 Not enough opportunities available, especially for minorities.

503 I haven't pursued scientific professional development opportunities.

504 There is very little time to get continuing education. We are short staffed in many areas, and we have very little administrative support. This makes it difficult to pursue scientific professional development.

505 I was not aware of scientific professional development opportunities available at EPA.

506 I am an (b) (6) - we audit the EPA - we are not scientists.

507

More opportunities are needed for scientific training for all physical scientists. Our training options are largely limited to those for which a case can be made that it provides direct support to program management. Please don't limit scientific training and career development only to folks that are currently in positions in the (b) (6) track. Newer hires to the EPA may desire to contribute to basic and applied science, or explore positions supporting (b) (6) This is hindered and hamstrung by lack of access to training and career development opportunities.

508 Not applicable. I'm not a scientist.

509 I am relatively new to EPA and I have not heard of these opportunities.

510 What scientific professional development?

511 Limited resources (funds, time, staffing) did not allow time for scientific inquiry/development. Training has been limited to mandatory classes that are fit into downtime from major projects. Limited backup of resources for scientific topics has not materialized.

512 The last two years have been difficult in terms of development and training due to lack of funding and lack of management support.

513 I am not familiar with all of the scientific processes for the agency so am unable to answer.

514 The pandemic has impacted these opportunities.

515 did not know about this

516 n/a



517 na

518 what scientific professional development opportunities?

519 Travel and training budgets are always tight. I take turns with coworkers attending conferences, trainings, etc. It is frustrating that EPA does not pay for continuing ed to maintain scientific/work related certificates and licenses. Also frustrating that EPA does not pay for memberships in scientific/professional organizations (which often offer training/professional development opportunities as well as access to cutting edge/newest research and developments in our field of expertise).

520

I transitioned from a contractor to federal employee in (b) (6) which was of course a very strange time. Still in the midst of the pandemic and soon to be in the transfer of administrations, I found it difficult to participate in scientific professional development, and especially collaboration. To the extent that I could, I would present some of my research at branch meetings and offer feedback to others doing the same; however, the different research people were doing seemed disjointed and insular in part because it was difficult to include many people in the brainstorming and design phase of developing research. It was easy enough to hop on Teams to present research in a slideshow, but the more difficult work of listening to many perspectives and delegating responsibilities was hampered by the tools available to us during quarantine.

521 My team (b) (6) It would be nice to have a training tailored to our work. Much of the scientific integrity training is either too vague to be helpful or too detailed in the scientific process to be meaningful to people not actively involved in the data gathering and analysis.

522 Pandemic and the Trump Administration affected opportunities.

523 Our branch is discouraged from getting involved in scientific organizations.

524 Would like to see more science/research based opportunities for newer employees to explore in the regions.

525

I work in the (b) (6) Even though some of the critical data stores we work with involve scientific data/information there are no real processes and procedures for data beyond data collection. Since most of the data is collected by the programs we defer to them regarding data QA/QC, but that is a mistake because data can be misused even when it is reported.

526 I have not witnessed many of these opportunities provided to those I know who are scientists at the agency in the last two years.

527 Lies! Lies! Lies!

528 (b) (6) is a bad section to work for if you're not (b) (6) Training money for my (b) (6) was diverted to (b) (6) travel in Oct 2019. I am yet to get credentialed but so grateful all of our (b) (6) are. I've lost faith in the (b) (5)

529 A lot of Ph.D. scientists at EPA wind up doing trivial administrative work because there is no audience for their scientific work. This is true in both Democratic and Republican Administrations but especially the latter.

530 Working in a remote location (i.e., not headquarters), I am not eligible for many of the career opportunities that are relevant to the work I do. This has been especially frustrating over the past 15 months as I've seen many 120-day details that are open to HQ employees only while we have all been teleworking. This would have been a great opportunity to expand the talent pool and develop some of the careers in the outer offices. Perhaps as we move forward, and if the Agency does indeed expand rather than contract its teleworking opportunities for staff, maybe some of those details could be opened up Agency wide.

531 I was not aware of any opportunities for scientific professional development, outside of webinars.

532 Not applicable

533 With COVID there is obviously a lack of opportunities for professional development and prior to that the (b) (6) Re-organization took place. I still don't understand the benefit of that since so many people still do things the way they used to before the re-org. It seems to not align any better with the (b) (6), I think putting them all in the IOAA doesn't make sense and I think that those programs just create additional confusion over what staff should work on. They seem to pick pet projects and then after a year abandon them and start new ones with no concern for what has already been built.

534 I would love to have had more opportunities to work on projects that did data collection and analysis.

535 there did not seem to be much scientific training at all, however the pandemic probably had a big effect on that.

536

It is hard to be satisfied when you are assigned to work on regulations that must get out on very tight schedules (and therefore take up all your time and prevent you from pursuing more long term professional development opportunities), all the while knowing that if there is a change in administration you will just have to spend the same amount of time undoing all the same work.

537 There didn't seem to be much scientific professional development for staff with 20 or more years with the Agency.

538 At times I felt as though I was discouraged from participating on certain scientific professional development groups and other initiatives.

539 If the agency wants scientific integrity, but fails to hire well qualified chemists to produce the environmental sample results and fails to maintain current laboratory technology, then the agency is not supporting the results needed for their enforcement and their policies. The agency would have to then depend upon outside sources for the results. The budget for the laboratory enterprise, and specifically the regional laboratory is such that the staffing and equipment are not supported by the agency. More environmental samples are being requested of staff chemists, but their budget continues to shrink at an alarming rate.

540 Did not have those kinds of opportunities.

541 few opportunities

542 IN past 2 years, no training was offered to incoming staff that I am aware of.

543 I was not here the past two calendar years.

544 Absolutely no opportunities to strengthen my knowledge of an emerging concern in my field when a national conference presenting peer-reviewed research was convened. The money was available (in fact my Branch gave training and travel money to another Branch at the end of the fiscal year), but I was told that I had to attend a state program review even though others were available to go. Another time I was invited to go to technical presentations at one of our labs, and it was denied. The so-called technical managers in my chain of command have no interest in keeping up with advances in science, only (b) (6)

545

I cannot say this is any one person's fault, but more a consequence of the system or leadership's fear of moving away from status quo. My role could be more scientific (research based) and even my leadership has suggested this is possible, but in reality, we struggle terribly with unnecessary meetings that eat up tremendous amounts of time. That lost time could be put to much better use (research) and not briefing material in a meeting that could be read in an email. Basically, many of us have lost our understanding of meetings are best suited for - people coming together to discuss something or solve a problem (and not just listen to metrics). While I am on the topic of lost time, sorry if this seems like a rant, but other unnecessary events include: three levels of one on ones (e.g., not just with immediate supervisor) and briefing three or more separate chains of command and exactly the same material.

546 I am not a scientist

547

Not satisfied. (b) (5), (b) (6)

548 It would have been helpful to have training programs set up for the (b) (6) that I work in. Or even have access to outside training.

549 In the past two years, I don't recall many instances which scientific professional development opportunities came up.

550 None

551 The implementation of the planning process and acquiring resources is very top down, moved too fast, lacked adequate discussion, and was strictly not transparent. QA has transitioned to draconian levels with the system one of policing and compliance rather than collegial understanding and improvement. Publication pathways are long and burdensome with the function now more on the scientist (as are many other processes).

552 no substantial training on scientific integrity policy of business practices.

553 In the last 4years there was no incentive to develop additional skills. The administration already had a predetermined outcome they wanted and any information contrary to that was suppressed. This included silencing employees and putting unqualified people in decision making positions.

554 I did not enlist any any opportunities.

555 There is no road for professional development for me. I am not a lead scientist. Only lead scientist have a pathway to promotion.

556 Data and findings were politicized. (b) (5)

557 There are none - no continuous education, limited collaboration outside of the agency, management that is untruthful and non transparent, etc.

558 When we asked for trainings/conferences/workshops that weren't 100% linked to our area, the response from our manager would be NO. There is money only for your specific job area. In many instances these requests were linked to our duties but not the 100% linked they wanted.

559 Due to budget constraints the technical trainings are limited to approximately (b) (6) per person per year. This is not sufficient funding for technical/scientific trainings. Many technical workshops/trainings/conferences are around \$200 (not including travel).

560

Front- and second-line supervisors seem reluctant to "let" staff go on detail assignments, even if the knowledge gained would be of benefit to the organization upon their return.

561 Training funds are extremely limited. Other EPA staff are generous with their time and sharing knowledge, but staff also need access to outside training and expertise. Also, due to staffing shortages, staff don't have time to read journal articles and other tasks that would allow them to keep up with new advances, etc.

562 Was not able to do training

563 Focus has been on lean management.

564 I'm a new employee so it is likely there are available to me, but I do not know where to find such opportunities

565 Scientific professional development opportunities such as attending conferences not made easily available or support clearly stated (joined agency a year ago).

566

In my professional 5 degree opinion, scientific development for individuals at EPA is non-existent. The mindset of management appears to be one of complacency - once one has a degree, no further education is warranted. Nothing could be further from the truth. Science is not static, it grows and changes with advancement in technology. This Agency would rather spend money on management travel than updating personnel with new scientific principles and techniques. We need honest-to-God high quality training in chemistry, physics, biology, geology, data analysis, data presentation, not to mention effective communications! I thank you for allowing me to speak my mind on this issue. Like most of these survey's they go nowhere. It will be interesting to see if anyone is listening.

567

COVID-19 impacted attending in-person conferences, many were canceled, some were shifted to virtual events. Lack of support for Embassy Science Fellowship Program

568 Prior to pandemic, there was close scrutiny on attendance at professional conferences. Reportedly to limit costs, but that was only one part and speculation ran high regarding hidden agendas, e.g., limiting interaction among scientific peers.

569

While there is encouragement to develop and maintain expertise, there is no transparent path to career advancement in (b) (6) above GS-14 unless you move into management. Many other offices have a national expert or other path to GS-15+ outside of management. All agency offices need to have an established path to GS-15 and above so that the agency can continue to benefit from their expertise and staff can advance their careers. The criteria for this path needs to open, available and transparent to staff so they can plan their careers.

570

Would like more opportunities to apply analytical models. Would like more documentation on Database Schemas and individual data fields as well as a history of when field reporting formats change.

571 Not much money spent to further employee's training or continuing education in the class room or in the field

572 a history of toxic managers has made it impossible for me to advance. My current manager is supportive but due to past decisions, I have no room to grow.

573 Having the survey period go back over 2019 through 2020 is not useful. My answers are much different between the previous administration and the current administration. I cannot answer any of the questions. The survey should have covered opinions for 2019 and then for 2020.

574 I wish it were easier to attend scientific conferences and that there was more encouragement to do so throughout the management chain.

575 N/A

576 This is a real problem for the Agency. We operate in an environment where "leadership already know what they need to know" so there is no need, or support, for newer staff's scientific professional development.

577 The training budget is way too low, and outside of a management opportunity, there is no promotion incentive for technical people with 20 to 40 years of experience, not to retire or find career opportunities outside of EPA. Having more "technical GS -14" opportunities would help.

578 I haven't really been offered scientific professional development opportunities.

579 I do not believe there was an opportunity granted to receive scientific professional development training.

580 It is not that we are prohibited from doing so. It's just that we are so overworked and have no extra time to do any of these activities.

581 Our (b) (6) position has been left vacant. This is an important position that helps development of science in Superfund.

582 Professional development is not readily available. You generally have to find opportunities for professional development and present them to your supervisor for approval.

583 I don't feel like professional development was encouraged, although I probably could have done more if I had advocated for it.

584 No, though at my level the previous administration had little impact whatsoever.

585 COVID impacted a lot of opportunities for career development, some of which were not available to complete remotely

586 I was not aware of any.

587 "Professional" Development is too generalized and geared toward administrative tasks and politically-motivated policy. Most new job postings are not scientifically oriented, offering little in the way of career opportunities.

588 Made assumptions everyone followed integrity/ethical behavior. I am a recent hire May/2020 and been afforded multiple training opportunities. I am not in the scientific community, ethical/integrity applies to all functions.

589 There is a significant lack of resources and priority to support participation in professional/technical societies or to maintain or expand training to keep current technically.

590 scientific professional development was highly discouraged over the past two years. Staff were not allowed to attend scientific conferences, and publishing was highly discouraged.

591 Not enough training and travel budget

592 Very little scientific based training offered. The significance of professional development through specialized scientific training was not promoted.

593 During the previous administration, scientific integrity was woefully undercut or missing entirely due to budget cuts, lack of science practiced due to administration's policy/bias and deep disdain for federal workforce. There were little to no opportunities for professional development and as personnel retired, positions were NOT backfilled which has led to all other employees increased workloads, decreased pay as no raises were supported which has led to a disgruntled, unappreciated federal workforce. This environment does NOT promote career development. Career development was/is not supported due to funding and current culture. I look forward to increased support from the new administration and have high hopes that our culture can and will change through increased support and budgets for the federal workforce and support for scientific integrity based in policies supported by science instead of policies developed based on personal bias and complete denial of science based data to develop policies such as climate change isn't happening.

594 No comments

595 I am not a scientist so this is really NA

596 I don't feel like there is much scientific professional development given to the data science work related to (b) (6) in a way that leads to better decision making tools or shows the importance to bringing on additional staff to address the (b) (6) needs as demonstrated by the number of open, ongoing and new cases and staff's ability to address these cases in conjunction with all other required tasks.

597 felt these opportunities were only made available to select staff or if it did not align directly with your current job duties, even though I had strong interest and capability

598 doesn't apply to my position

599 No enough diverse detail opportunities

600 The pandemic put a stop to everything and this overwhelms whatever was available in 2019.

601 There is too much work for existing staff. We desperately need more permanent hires and more funded post-doc opportunities. Overworking federal staff means less time to pursue promotion-oriented work and the (b) (6) process.

602 Not applicable.

603 there weren't many opportunities.

604 N/A

605 It would have been good to have more technical training aimed at supporting particular programs provided regionally and nationally. Areas where we know we have weaknesses.

606 technical trainings are very limited, mainly because they are often costly.

607 Not applicable to my position

608 I didn't think it was worth asking about professional development opportunities.

609 What opportunities?

610 I was told that I could not attend scientific conferences in my first year of employment, (b) (5)

611 Facility decommissioning demands and overwhelming workload resulted in loss of professional credentialing and certifications due to administration and technical tasks.

612 Regional training offered annually, but I cannot recall if additional sessions (more focused) with actual case study or examples was provided.

613 Program related training is always in short supply. This is something EPA could improve upon.

614 There were none.

615 Not clear what the scientific professional development opportunities there were/are available to me.

616 Very difficult to connect with other scientist at the EPA. Closed environment that is not very welcoming.

617 Management severely limits participation in professional meetings and workshops. Management also severely delays the review of abstracts and publications. My professional development has basically stopped in its tracks.

618 part of it is that there was the pandemic that caused a lot of opportunities to go away. I have been fortunate and been able to go on trips and attend conferences, sometimes more than one a year. But overall, there are more people interested in participating than there are slots available.

619 I feel like I have been sidelined. My performance reviews are outstanding but my input is not valued and I have limited opportunities for professional development. It's unfortunate that the office has not made better use of its talent pool.

620 Not all info is available to every line of work.

621 Since I began in this position 4.5 years ago, my ability to collaborate with other scientists on projects, branch out to explore and work with others, exercise professional judgement, speak freely, and voice dissent on managerial decisions has been severely impaired by my supervisor. This supervisor's management style has been extremely controlling and overbearing in an unusually cautious way that it seems to have not only hindered scientific integrity, but my career and scientific professional development.

622 N/A

623 no opportunities made available

624 We had tried for more than a year to hold a virtual conference rather than our semi-annual in-person conference. Since we had few resources to do this, we wanted to use (b) (5) software to be able to host the conference. We were prevented from accessing this on-line software for use because of FITARA rules, which are being overly rigorously applied by (b) (6) . Many other Federal agencies have used this software successfully for their online conferences. As a result, we were not able to host a conference. No other software comes close to the functionality that we'd need to run a virtual conference (or even an in-person conference) will no (or less) contractor support and cost savings.

625 unfortunately with COVID many professional meetings were cancelled and scientists were unable to participate

626 Limited time as a manager to attend opportunities, but appreciated the virtual options when I could

627 No, they were intentionally made very difficult based on personal dislike for individuals. Most experiences are detailed in earlier questions.

628 Training, particularly on scientific literacy, is lacking for nonscientists at EPA.

629 No training accessible for communications and/or policy staff

630 This was not openly discussed at the Agency.

631 Unaware of scientific professional development opportunities

632 I was not encouraged to pursue scientific development/classes/further education during these years.

633 COVID made training and field work impossible

634 No opportunities were offered. Region does not believe in developmental details.

635 Having only been at EPA &lt;(b) (6) finding scientific courses targeted for a (b) (6) audience is challenging.

636 To the best of my knowledge there was no opportunities other than the basic on line training.

637 Too quick to move to decisions without scientific basis

638 Received little to no emails (in (b) (6) on the topic.

639 Decisions were based on political implications

640 more opportunity to work with (b) (6) should be provided

641 n/a

642 limited due to covid, usually happy with scientific professional development opportunities

643 I'm not sure I was provided with any scientific professional development opportunities. My work mostly deals with regulatory and policy analysis. I would very much appreciate more opportunities to understand how to better understand the scientific development side.

644 opportunities are lacking

645 Administrative burdens diminish time available for scientific professional development; opportunities for direct field training limited; opportunities for scientifically based details also limited

646 Were not encouraged to do certain work or analyses or told to only do what was directed.

647 Travel not allowed or funding not allowed.

648 While my region makes efforts to prepare occasional 1-hour optional trainings for the employees which is supported by management, there was little effort put in by management to have more rigorous scientific professional development options. Staff are often required to find their own trainings and there is never any budget to have speakers present. Expert EPA staff are not given the work time to develop trainings for the development of their colleagues (and subsequent succession planning).

649 work overload- no time for scientific professional development

650 During the past two years (b) (5)

Dark times...

651 There were none. Training budget was non-existent.



652 budget is always too tight, conferences held virtually were not as robust as in person meetings, not much support from 1st line supervisor for scientific development, bigger push for supervisory development, no advancement potential for non-supervisor technical senior level career

653 Training is limited except for mandatory items.

654 I believe that the declining scale and scope of research at EPA, perhaps except for in certain key areas, left people unable to contemplate research at scales that were appropriate to the problems needing to be investigated. Basically, EPA is underinvesting in research. Yes, I could go to conferences (COVID-notwithstanding) but the real issues is a vigorous and ambitious research environment, with appropriate skills and expertise, which has been lacking or declining.

655 none

656 Little to no training opportunities related to my specific position. Was told to just "figure it out" and learn on the job.

657 There were none.

658 EPA modeling systems cannot be downloaded and used by EPA staff. As a result only those whose job function is "modeler" are able to use those tools. This is a problem because the tool becomes underutilized and often others don't understand the language of the science because they have not been able to work with the tool. EPA staff should be able to download and use EPA programs without supervisory approval, IT staff having to install it, issues with the install not working correctly due to security lockouts. For example I can't download the new version of AERMOD because it is a zip file.

659 I didn't hear about any opportunities for scientific training, certification, mentorship, or other programs that I might consider Scientific Professional Development.

660 Few opportunities due to Covid.

661 EPA should let staff write and publish articles as professional development when management does not support their efforts.

662 Could use more training.

663 I am not aware of many opportunities at the Regional level.

664 My particular area of expertise is related to (b) (5)

665 If the training was related to a "controversial" matter (i.e. (b) (5), then only an appointed (by the DRA) "(b) (6)" representative" could attend the training.

666 Not applicable to me

667 Training for professional was not as frequent as it had been.

668 no basis to judge

669 This is not a major part of my job.

670 na

671 There wasn't time to take advantage of opportunities. Too much work.

672 Too short staffed and dealing with too much process!

673 Not given funding or opportunities to engage with larger scientific community.

674 Not in my field to make a judgement call.

675 I'm not involved in science

676 n/a

677 My position does not involve scientific professional development. While I would like to participate in some conferences, workshops or trainings where I could get a better understanding of science related to cleanups and other EPA work that I need to communicate to communities, there isn't much time or opportunity for me to do so.

678 I am not aware of any scientific professional development opportunities that occurred in the past 2 years

679 Science wasn't important to the agency in our last Administration. It was more about information that wasn't true and putting money into the hands of industry.

680 There was no real opportunity for training.

681 Scientific integrity was not really discussed before in 2019.

682 Science did not seem extremely important to the previous admin as it does now.

683 Global pandemic impacted many opportunities

684 priorities were placed on completing analyses quickly and in a way that was not controversial, the workload generally prevented additional development

685 Staffing and FTE overload have prevented the time and effort needed for scientific professional development. lacking in-person meetings and conducting all meetings on-line also inhibited the ability to fully focus and engage on scientific professional development.

686 Previous administration systematically suppressed the role of science in decision making.

687 The workload is too heavy compared to the amount of available resources (i.e. staff) and is accompanied by unreasonable deadlines. As a result, there just isn't enough time left over for professional development. This is unfortunate because we should be leaders in our various scientific fields rather than lagging behind. Additionally, adequate funding has not been available to pursue development opportunities.

688 Staff have become very isolated from their peers in the scientific community and other non-governmental entities. Over the last decade, EPA has slowly and consistently decreased the budget and tolerance for staff to attend IN PERSON conferences, meetings and other opportunities to present our work, exchange ideas and learn from other scientists and practitioners. If your work is at all controversial or controversial-adjacent, there is a general feeling that you are not allowed to talk to outside entities without permission. Then, even if you do, there is intense pressure to self-censure and say little because everyone is terrified of their own shadow. So many years of EPA being under intense scrutiny and vilification of EPA and federal workers generally has taken its toll in ways large and small - scientific professional development is just one of those ways. This must change if we are to address the pressing environmental issues of the day and build our reputation back as scientific leaders.

689 They needed more training and from the top we needed to feel trusted that there were no political conflicts with science.

690 We have so few training dollars available that it is not possible for everyone in the Region to attend relevant trainings. I am generally able to attend one training/conference per year, but my role (technical support) is multi-discipline, so I have to choose which specific discipline to advance/maintain from year-to-year.

691 not funded or encouraged

692 In general there is not that many scientific professional positions beyond the GS-13 level. Usually you must go into management as there is no technical track to a level GS-14/15, which can lead to people who are not great managers going into supervisory roles when they would be better suited to an expert positions. At least on the regional level.

693 Opportunities are not supported depending on the demand of your current duties in your role. Depends on where you fall within the scope of the other staff in your division

694 There has been a large effort to train internally at (b) (6) which was a great success, but professional development is limited and not particularly encouraged or demonstrated to be a top priority.

695 The decline in the budget resulted in a deficit in the number of opportunities. This was exacerbated by management whose goal was to create a work environment that encouraged people to leave the agency. Additionally, when management lacks experience and understanding for the importance of protecting the environmental health of children across our nation - professional development is not a priority.

696 I was not aware of any scientific professional development opportunities over the past couple of years.

697 I was not encouraged to pursue scientific professional development, or explicitly afforded opportunities.

698 I was repeatedly denied opportunities to attend conferences and other professional meetings due to either "lack of budget" or an arbitrary cap on attendees.

699 Not applicable to me.

700 Prior administration did not believe in science, so scientific professional development opportunities were not encouraged.

701 the last 4 yrs has been a slog of just trying to last thru. just hoping to keep bad things from happening or hoping you are not asked to do something bad is not a rewarding career period.

702 N/A

703 (b) (6) pulled back from their commitments to engage with cross regional investments in both funding and mentoring

704 There are few opportunities for staff scientist to review or comment on much of the Agency's research, interpretations and policy/decision-making. The Agency should provide much more transparency and many more opportunities for all personnel to have a voice on the Agency's work and operations/management as one never knows where expertise may lie. Also, perspectives and review that is internally crowd-sourced internal will generally yield a much higher quality thought / data product. Typically those who are passionate and knowledgeable about a topic will make an investment in time to weigh in and if those opportunities are not provided for all, those critical feedback elements will be missed and human health and the environment will suffer. There is no culture of inclusion in EPA or EPA (b) (6) decision-making. .

705 What would those be as an (b) (6)

706 I have a degree in (b) (6) Even though scientific topics are commonly in the workplans I review and provide feedback on, scientific trainings are often not shared with my team as often as other teams in my division or region because we are seen as the "money people." It's very frustrating.

707 There were limited opportunities & management support available (beyond the bare minimum needed to just perform day-to-day required tasks.)

708 Scientific professional development opportunities are only encouraged for selected individuals.

709 I did not see advancing scientific professional development as a priority throughout EPA. Policy objectives were defined and the science was (b) (5)

710 I rarely have time to consider developing my scientific knowledge given the constant crush of "division operating plan" deadlines and (b) (6) desire to approve state submissions even in the face of known deficiencies. (b) (6) does not prioritize the work of identifying deficiencies in state submissions or finding ways to reduce air pollution; the priority in (b) (6) is getting rid of the SIP backlog by approving as many SIP submissions as possible.

711 Time generally not available to pursue scientific projects. Pandemic made it easier to attend conferences over this time because they went virtual. However, little resources to attend conferences generally.